

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 29, 2004. Claims 1-51 are presented for examination. Claims 1, 5, 9, 13, 26, and 27 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention. Claims 28-51 have been added to provide Applicant with a more complete scope of protection. Claims 1, 5, 9, 13, 26, 27, 35, 40, and 48-51 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claims 1-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. Re-37,031 E (*Nishiwaki*), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,435,544 (*Mandel*).

As shown above, Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 5, 9, 13, 26, and 27 in terms that more clearly define what he regards as his invention. Applicant submits that these amended independent claims and new independent Claims 35, 40 and 48-51, together with the remaining claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 1 is a printing system in which a host device and at least one of a plurality of printers are connected via a communication medium, and a print job produced in the host device is transferred to the printer to execute printing. The printing system includes memory means, requisition means, retrieval means, and information means. Paper output place information, regarding the paper output place used in the print job, is registered in the memory means. The requisition means issues a request for paper output place information, enabling a user to specify a paper output place used in a designated print job according to an instruction from the user. The retrieval means retrieves the paper output place information for the

designated print job from the memory means. The information means (a) conveys the paper output place information for the designated print job, obtained by the retrieval means, to the user, in response to issuance of the request by the requisition means, (b) inhibits informing the user of the paper output place information when a request is not issued from the requisition means, and (c) enables to inform the information by which the user can confirm which paper output place of which printer is used for the designated print job, when the request is issued by the requisition means in a case where the plural printers are present in the printing system.

Among other important features of Claim 1 are that the information means (a) conveys the paper output place information for the designated print job, obtained by the retrieval means, to the user, in response to issuance of the request by the requisition means, (b) inhibits informing the user of the paper output place information when a request is not issued from the requisition means, and (c) enables to inform the user of information by which the user can confirm which paper output place of which printer is used for the designated print job, when the request is issued by the requisition means in a case where plural printers are present in the printing system.

Nishiwaki relates to a printer which has a function of locking bins containing printouts so that the security of each printed material can be protected.

Mandel is not seen to add anything that would overcome the deficiencies of *Nishiwaki*.

Applicant submits that the combination of *Nishiwaki* and *Mandel*, assuming such a combination would be permissible, would not teach or suggest the feature of Claim 1 of the information means (a) conveying the paper output place information for the designated print job, obtained by the retrieval means, to the user, in response to issuance of

the request by the requisition means, (b) inhibiting informing the user of the paper output place information when a request is not issued from the requisition means, and (c) enabling to inform the user of information by which the user can confirm which paper output place of which printer is used for the designated print job, when the request is issued by the requisition means in a case where plural printers are present in the printing system.

Further, the Office Action on page 3 specifically concedes that *Nishiwaki* fails to teach the requisition means of Claim 1. In fact, the controller 100 of the *Nishiwaki* printer that decides which bin is to be used from among the available bins (column 5, lines 61 and 62).

The Office Action, however, takes the position that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention to modify the printing system of *Nishiwaki* with the multibin mailbox system of *Mandel*.

The Office Action cites column 28, lines 57-63, as disclosing the requisition function of Claim 1. Applicant disagrees. The cited passage merely states that a customer can additionally or alternatively look at the mailbox user interface to be directed or assisted to find their "mail" at their assigned mailbox locations, and that the mailbox user interface, when actuated, may, if desired, scroll through all the various customer names and bin locations of customers currently having jobs in the mailbox unit. However, nothing has been found in *Mandel* that would teach or suggest requisition function of Claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claim 1 is clearly patentable over *Nishiwaki* and *Mandel*, taken separately or in any possible combination (if any).

Independent Claims 5 and 9 are method and computer-readable memory medium claims, respectively, corresponding to system Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

Additionally, independent Claims 13, 26, 27, 35, 40, and 48-51 include features similar as those discussed above in connection with Claim 1. Accordingly, Claims 13, 26, 27, 35, 40, and 48-51 are believed to be patentable for reasons substantially similar to those discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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